

JOHN PIPER: How Should Miraculous Gifts Be Ministered in Church?

Where would you say the place for gifts like tongues, healing and prophecy is in the life of the church today?

I will tell you what I do, whether it is the right thing or not. I'm not going to die on this hill, but I will tell you what I do.

I think that these kind of gifts are most effectively and appropriately ministered in smaller groups rather than on Sunday morning. Sunday morning meaning the large gathered body of lots of people with lots of strangers and the need for some kind of movement in the service, rather than the whole thing being devoted to individual expressions.

So when I think of trying to do whatever elements of [1 Corinthians 12:13-14](#) are appropriate for today, I would want my people to know that I believe in those things and that I want them to flourish in those things.

I think that we should, spontaneously in relationships and especially in smaller groups, take the time to ask people, "Did you bring anything from the Lord tonight that you think we need to hear?" You could use whatever language you want. You could say, "Do you have a word of knowledge for us. Do you have a word of prophecy?" And if you are scared to use that kind of language you could say, "Has God impressed upon you in some way something that you think another person in this room, or all of us, need to hear from your walk with God?" And open yourself up to that.

Someone might say something that just penetrates right through to the core of another person. Or maybe they will minister a healing, or whatever. So, that is my answer.

Now I know that there are groups today—reformed groups—that try to fold certain prophetic elements into Sunday morning. They have a little microphone at the front where people can come up, and they have an elder or two standing there. The words that people want to share are first tested by one of the elders who judge whether the Scripture they are going to read or the poem they are going to read or the word they are going to deliver is appropriate. And while there is music playing in the background, during the interlude in between songs, the person can give whatever they are going to give at the microphone in front. And where this is done I've seen it done with decency and order the way Paul would like. But we've never gone that route at Bethlehem.